

CLAIMS

1 1. A method comprising:

2 placing a predetermined solder pattern onto a pad provided on a substrate; and

3 heating said predetermined solder pattern, wherein a visual appearance of said heated

4 predetermined solder pattern being indicative of whether said solder is lead-free.

2 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said substrate comprises a printed circuit board.

3 3. The method of claim 1, wherein placing said predetermined solder pattern comprises passing

4 solder through at least one stencil aperture and onto said pad.

4 4. The method of claim 1, wherein said predetermined solder pattern comprises at least one

5 symbol.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein placing said predetermined solder pattern comprises placing

2 solder at one end of an indicator strip.

1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising examining said heated predetermined solder pattern

2 to determine if said solder is lead-free.

1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein examining said heated predetermined solder pattern comprises

2 visually identifying whether said predetermined solder pattern after heating is in substantially a same
3 pattern as said predetermined solder pattern before heating.

1 8. The method of claim 6, wherein examining said heated predetermined solder pattern comprises
2 determining whether an amount of reflow is greater than a predetermined amount.

9. A method comprising:

 providing a pad on a substrate;

 placing solder on said pad; and

 heating said solder so as to create reflow, a visual appearance of said heated solder being

indicative of whether said solder is lead-free.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein said substrate comprises a printed circuit board.

1 11. The method of claim 9, wherein placing said solder on said pad comprises passing said solder

2 through at least one stencil aperture and onto said pad.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein said solder is placed onto said pad in a predetermined

2 pattern.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein said predetermined pattern comprises at least one symbol.

1 14. The method of claim 9, further comprising identifying whether said solder is lead-free based
2 on an amount of reflow of said heated solder.

1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein identifying whether said solder is lead-free comprises
2 visually identifying whether said solder after reflow is in substantially the same predetermined pattern as
3 before reflow.

1 16. The method of claim 14, wherein identifying said solder as lead-free comprises determining
2 whether an amount of reflow is greater than a predetermined amount.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein said determining is based on a distance of reflow along said
2 pad.

1 18. The method of claim 9, wherein placing said solder on said pad comprises placing solder at
2 one end of an indicator strip.

1 19. A method of identifying whether a printed circuit board is lead-free, said method
2 comprising:

3 receiving said printed circuit board having a heated solder pattern formed thereon; and
4 identifying whether solder on said printed circuit board is lead-free based on whether said
5 heated solder pattern is substantially similar to a predetermined solder pattern.

1 20. The method of claim 19, wherein said predetermined solder pattern comprises at least one
2 of a symbol and a character.

1 21. The method of claim 19, wherein said solder on said printed circuit board is determined to
2 be lead-free if said heated solder pattern is substantially similar to said predetermined solder pattern.

1 22. The method of claim 19, wherein said solder on said printed circuit board is determined to
2 not be lead-free if said heated solder pattern substantially differs from said predetermined solder
3 pattern.

1 23. A method of identifying whether a printed circuit board is lead-free, said method
2 comprising:

3 receiving said printed circuit board having a heated solder pattern formed thereon; and
4 identifying whether solder on said printed circuit board is lead-free based on a distance that
5 said solder reflows.

1 24. The method of claim 23, wherein said identifying comprising comparing a distance that

2 said solder reflows with at least one indicator provided on said printed circuit board.

1 25. The method of claim 24, wherein said solder on said printed circuit board is determined to
2 be lead-free if said solder has not reflowed further than said at least one indicator.

1 26. The method of claim 24, wherein said solder on said printed circuit board is determined to
2 not be lead-free if said solder has reflowed further than said at least one indicator.

1 27. A printed circuit board comprising:
2 a substrate having a plurality of first pads; and
3 a second pad formed on said substrate; and
4 a identifying solder pattern formed on said second pad, wherein said identifying solder pattern
5 visually indicates whether solder used to form said identifying solder pattern is lead-free.

1 28. The printed circuit board of claim 27, wherein said identifying solder pattern comprises a
2 symbol after reflow of said solder.

1 29. The printed circuit board of claim 27, wherein said identifying solder pattern comprises a
2 non-symbol created by reflow of solder from a previous symbol.

1 30. The printed circuit board of claim 27, wherein said substrate comprises a printed circuit
2 board.